

Appl. No. 09/681,975
Reply to Office Action of April 19, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (new): A virtual-space providing apparatus, which is connected to a user terminal via a network, and which provides said user terminal with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space created in the network, said virtual-space providing apparatus comprising:

virtual room providing means for imitating a real room of a user using said user terminal, and for providing the virtual room, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

virtual store providing means for providing the user terminal connected via the network with the virtual store, said virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means, wherein, when the user purchases a virtual commodity in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means using said user terminal, benefit information showing benefit of purchasing the virtual commodity is transmitted to said user terminal, wherein, when a virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store using said user terminal, said virtual store providing means places the virtual commodity in the virtual room.

Claim 15 (new): A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said virtual store providing means comprises accumulating means for accumulating virtual commodities as three-dimensional image data.

Claim 16 (new): A virtual-space providing apparatus, which is connected to a user terminal via a network, and which provides said user terminal with various kinds of

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services through a three-dimensional virtual space created in the network, said virtual-space providing apparatus comprising:

virtual room providing means for imitating a real room of a user using said user terminal, and for providing the virtual room, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

virtual store providing means for providing the user terminal connected via the network with the virtual store, said virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means, wherein, when the user purchases a virtual commodity in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means using said user terminal, benefit information showing benefit of purchasing the virtual commodity is transmitted to said user terminal, wherein, when a commodity is purchased in the real store, said virtual store providing means places a virtual commodity imitating the real commodity in the virtual room, wherein, when a commodity is purchased in the real store, said virtual store providing means places a virtual commodity imitating the real commodity in the virtual room.

Claim 17 (new): A virtual-space providing apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein said virtual store providing means comprises accumulating means for accumulating virtual commodities as three-dimensional image data.

Claim 18 (new): A virtual-space providing system, which is connected via a network to a user terminal used by a user, a real-store terminal installed in a store in a real space, and a virtual-space providing apparatus providing said user terminal with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space, wherein said virtual-space providing apparatus comprises:

virtual room providing means for imitating a real room of the user using the user terminal, and for providing a virtual room, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

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virtual store providing means for providing the user terminal connected via the network with a virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means for transmitting benefit information to the user terminal so that in the real space the user can get benefit of purchasing a virtual commodity, when the virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means; and

said user terminal comprises:

a removable storage medium; and

writing means for writing the benefit information transmitted from said benefit-information transmitting means, on said storage medium, wherein, when a virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store by using the user terminal, said virtual store providing means places the virtual commodity in the virtual room.

Claim 19 (new): A virtual-space providing system, which is connected via a network to a user terminal used by a user, a real-store terminal installed in a store in a real space, and a virtual-space providing apparatus providing said user terminal with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space, wherein said virtual-space providing apparatus comprises:

virtual room providing means for imitating a real room of the user using the user terminal, and for providing a virtual room, which can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network, on the three-dimensional virtual space;

virtual store providing means for providing the user terminal connected via the network with a virtual store selling virtual commodities imitating real commodities, on the three-dimensional virtual space; and

benefit-information transmitting means for transmitting benefit information to the user terminal so that in the real space the user can get benefit of purchasing a virtual commodity, when the virtual commodity is purchased in the virtual store provided by said virtual store providing means; and

said user terminal comprises:

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a removable storage medium; and

writing means for writing the benefit information transmitted from said benefit-information transmitting means, on said storage medium, wherein said real-store terminal comprises commodity information transmitting means for transmitting at least commodity information showing the purchased commodity, when a real commodity is purchased, to said virtual store providing means; and said virtual store providing means places a virtual commodity imitating the purchased commodity, in the virtual room according to the commodity information transmitted from said commodity information transmitting means.

Claim 20 (new): A virtual-space providing method for providing a user terminal connected via a network, with various kinds of services through a three-dimensional virtual space created in the network, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a virtual room imitating a real room of a user using the user terminal, on a three-dimensional virtual space so that the virtual room can be browsed using the user terminal connected via the network; and

providing a virtual store for selling virtual commodities, which can be placed in said virtual room, on the three-dimensional virtual space; wherein when a virtual commodity is purchased in said virtual store using said user terminal, benefit of purchasing the virtual commodity is given to said user terminal side so that the user can enjoy the benefit in a real store, wherein, when a commodity is purchased in the real store, a virtual commodity imitating imitates the purchased commodity, is placed in the virtual room.